**The Emmbrook Sixth Form**

Alternatives to University

Advice Booklet

2016-17

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**Alternatives to University**

Not everyone leaving school or college with level 3 qualifications wants to go on to full-time higher education; some opt to find a job instead. Some choose to combine further study with a part time job or volunteering while they consider their long term future.

Going to university is a popular choice, but it is not for everyone - and if you decide to find employment directly after your level 3 course, you will certainly not be alone.

People often choose to look for work at this point because they:

* want to avoid student debt
* have no desire to continue in full time education
* have selected a career that they can train for while in employment

In recent years there has been renewed interest in job opportunities for those leaving school with level 3 qualifications. The Government has been seeking to expand the number of Apprenticeship opportunities and there has been a growth in the availability of Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships.

Employers have become increasingly aware that high achieving students are choosing to leave education at 18 and they are adapting their recruitment models to reflect this trend.

**Apprenticeships**

Even though they are open to people with GCSEs or equivalent, with level 3 qualifications (A levels and level 3 Btecs) you can gain entry to a career through an **Advanced Level Apprenticeship**. These are available in a wide range of occupational areas. They offer the opportunity to undertake structured training with an employer, leading to work-related qualifications at level 3. After completing an Advanced Level Apprenticeship, you may wish to progress to a **Higher level Apprenticeship** or continue with part-time study in order to gain an HNC/D or foundation degree which, with further study, can be converted to a degree.

Apprenticeships are skills based programmes of learning and although you will already have level 3 qualifications (A levels or Btec), you may need to start an apprenticeship at level 2 or 3 in order acquire the necessary practical skills. Apprenticeships are flexible learning programmes and can take anything between 1 to 4 years to complete, depending on the level of difficulty involved and the ability of the apprentice.

Remember that you need to be flexible. As well as opportunities with training schemes aimed particularly at applicants with qualifications at level 3, also look at jobs for which the minimum entry requirement is lower. Such opportunities can attract many applicants with level 3 qualifications.

**Higher Apprenticeships** are also available in a growing number of career areas including financial services, ICT, engineering, business administration, fashion and textiles and the food and drink industries. Training leads to level 4 qualifications, such as a relevant professional qualification, HNC/D or foundation degree. A few Higher Apprenticeships lead to qualifications at level 5. For entry to Higher Apprenticeships, you are normally required to hold a level 3 qualification and/or have appropriate experience.   
  
For further information about Apprenticeships, see the website of the National Apprenticeship Service which provides information and lists current vacancies:   
<https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>

**Degree Apprenticeships** (aka sponsored degrees) are currently being developed in a number of sectors. These include:

•Chartered Surveying

•Electronic Systems Engineering

•Aerospace Engineering

•Aerospace Software Development

•Defence Systems Engineering

•Laboratory Science

•Nuclear

•Power Systems

•Public Relations

•Digital

•Automotive Engineering

•Banking Relationship Manager

•Construction

See the following link for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-rolls-out-flagship-degree-apprenticeships>

The link also gives you information about the companies and the universities that are involved in degree apprenticeships. Unfortunately, there appears not to be a single mechanism for searching and applying at this time.

**How and when do I apply?**

The apprenticeship website (<https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch> ) has a vacancy search function where you can search for suitable Apprenticeships in your area and apply via the website.

There are also a number of other websites that advertise apprenticeships, work with training, internships and work experience opportunities for school leavers. Please see the list at the end of this booklet.

Some apprenticeship providers (the organisations that teach the relevant work based qualifications) act as agents for employers. This is the case locally for jobs in sectors such as ICT; digital marketing; business/admin and childcare. You can contact the training provider directly, who will interview you and then put you forward for interview with the companies looking for apprentices. Contact details for local providers are at the end of the booklet.

You could also try approaching employers directly to ask whether they'd be interested in putting you through an Apprenticeship.  
  
Just like applying for a job, you can expect to attend interviews and, in some cases, you will also be given assessment tests (as mentioned above).  
  
Many young people apply for an apprenticeship during their final year at school, with a view to starting in the summer, especially if it is linked to a college course that begins on a particular date. However, you can start most programmes at any time of the year.

Be aware that some Apprenticeships are advertised well in advance of the start date. Others advertise for an immediate start. You will need to check the websites regularly to avoid missing an opportunity.

**What about pay and conditions?**

When you start your programme, you will be given an agreement that includes details of your training, your pay, your hours of work etc. Apprentices are entitled to the same holiday arrangements (at least 20 days, plus bank holidays) as any other employee.  
  
Once on an Apprenticeship, you will be employed and receive a wage. The current minimum wage rate for an apprentice is £3.30 per hour. This rate applies to apprentices aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. You must be paid at least the minimum wage rate for your age if you’re an apprentice aged 19 or over and have completed your first year.

Pay rates vary and many employers pay more than the minimum. Different job sectors offer varying levels of pay. For example, engineering, telecoms, finance and ICT tend to pay higher wages than hospitality or childcare. You should look carefully at the pay rates that are typically offered in the area of work of interest to you. As you progress though your apprenticeship, your employer may raise your hourly rate. It is advisable to ask about the pay structure before accepting an offer from an employer.

Employers are not required to guarantee a job offer at the end of your apprenticeship. However, in the vast majority of cases, an apprentice will be made an offer of a permanent job by their employer on successful completion of the apprenticeship.

**Work with training**

Some job sectors do not operate within the Government led National Apprenticeship Service yet offer excellent opportunities with training for professional qualifications. You are unlikely to see these advertised on <https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>. Instead, you should research employers in the job sector and check their own websites or use the sector specific websites listed at the end of the booklet.

An example of this is Accountancy. Many accountancy firms offer training contracts to school leavers who achieve 300 plus UCAS points at A level. The salaries are very competitive and you will be sponsored to study for professional qualifications.

**Further Study**

Under current legislation, you are entitled to up to 3 years post year 11 study from 16-19. Some students find that over the course of years 12 and 13 they change their ideas about what they wish to do in the future. Sometimes this means that they do not have the right A levels for the career of their choice. (Occasionally a student decides after year 12 that A levels are not for them and they move on to a local college to study a level 3 Btec - equivalent to up to 3 A levels).

Currently, Bracknell and Wokingham College ([www.bracknell.ac.uk](http://www.bracknell.ac.uk)) offer fast track A levels in a range of subjects which enable students to complete a full A level (AS and A2) in 1 year. \*\*\*This may not apply to all subjects due to the changes in A levels that have come into effect in the last year or so.

Local colleges also offer a range of professional qualifications that can be studied on a part time basis as part of their adult education provision. A full list of colleges can be found at the back of this booklet.

**Volunteering and Work Experience**

This option could be combined with part time study and/or part time work. It is particularly useful for students who are trying to get into a highly competitive Degree course or job sector. However, it is of use to all students who need to boost their CV in order to compete effectively for jobs or apprenticeships.

In general it is a case of researching local opportunities related to the job sector you are interested in and approaching organisations directly to ask for experience. If you have any personal or family contacts, make sure you use them!

Websites such as [www.yell.com](http://www.yell.com) are useful for finding specific businesses in your local area. Local government websites often carry lists of voluntary groups in the area. (<http://www.volunteercentrewokingham.btck.co.uk/LatestOpportunities>).

When approaching an employer for work experience you should try to get a contact name in the first instance by emailing or calling the organisation directly. Then send your CV with a covering letter explaining what sort of experience you are looking for and how it would benefit you in terms of your career aspirations. You should also make it clear when and how long you are available for.

Ideally you should keep track of who you have contacted and when. This will make it easier to judge when you should follow up with additional emails/phone calls. An organised and persistent approach is more likely to bring success.

The Do-it Trust is a national organisation that connects young people with volunteering opportunities on a local level. Go to <https://do-it.org/> for more details.

**Careers advice and guidance**

All students are able to access advice and guidance from the careers team in school. If you would like support please drop in to see us in the bungalow or contact us via your tutor or by email: [sspencer@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:sspencer@emmbrook.wokingham.sch.uk) .

After students leave school (and up to their 20th birthday) they can access the services of Adviza (formerly Connexions) at Wokingham Library, Denmark Street, Wokingham. They offer support for a range of issues including CV writing, job searching, applications for work/education and face to face careers guidance.

Adviza have an extremely useful website [www.adviza.org.uk](http://www.adviza.org.uk). The website is a one stop shop for information on careers, employment opportunities, links to other useful websites and work related issues such as writing a CV or a speculative letter.

We also compile a regular bulletin of job, apprenticeship and work experience opportunities which is emailed to parents and students. To ensure you receive this mailing, please make sure you keep the school up to date with any changes to home email addresses.

**Useful Websites**

**Career Information and Advice**

[www.adviza.org.uk](http://www.adviza.org.uk)

Adviza is a registered charity (formerly known as Connexions Thames Valley) who provide impartial information, advice and guidance to young people between the ages of 13 and 19. Adviza support young people into learning and work and can give advice on issues such as housing, relationships, bullying, health, substance misuse, finance and offending behaviour.

Since October 2014 they have also been the contractor for the National Careers Service in the Thames Valley Region, providing free, impartial advice to everyone aged 20 and over in the area.

<http://www.adviza.org.uk/who-am-i/young-person/useful-websites>

Adviza also have their own list of useful websites covering a wide range of subjects and job areas.

[www.eclips-online.co.uk](http://www.eclips-online.co.uk)

Emmbrook School subscribes to **Eclips** - an easy to use, high quality online resource which contains lots of information leaflets on jobs, careers and lifestyle topics.  There are several different ways of finding information on this site. You can use Job Groups, or by using A-Z guide. For advice on making choices, about jobs and courses and also in your personal life, look at General Information. If you aren’t sure what careers might interest you, get suggestions by using the Search option.

**Password**: RG41 1JP.

[www.allaboutcareers.com](http://www.allaboutcareers.com)

Industry specific careers advice. 24 sectors and 24 websites. Browse employers and get information on graduate schemes, graduate jobs, apprenticeships, placements and internships

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/applicn.htm>

A great resource for example CVs, covering letters, interview tips and aptitude tests.

<https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>

The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. This web-based service offers confidential, helpful and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.

<http://growingambitions.tes.co.uk/topics>

TES Growing Ambitions provides information and advice to help channel the aspirations of young people. Here you can find news and information on the changing careers landscape and discover the latest post-16 career routes available to young people.

[www.rcuk.ac.uk/careersinresearch](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/careersinresearch)

The site hosts an online suite of stories providing an insight about life as a researcher and the different career paths which researchers’ take.

[www.gocracker.com](http://www.gocracker.com)

Website for Science, Engineering and Technology careers

This website is designed to encourage young people to study STEM subjects and to pursue a career in the SET sector.  It has loads of information and news about STEM subjects, industry sectors, apprenticeships, colleges, universities and leading employers

[www.careersbox.co.uk](http://www.careersbox.co.uk)

An online library of career specific film, information and news. Links to apprenticeships schemes.

[www.gov.uk/further-education-skills/apprenticeships](http://www.gov.uk/further-education-skills/apprenticeships).

Register online to find out about vacancies in your area. Apprenticeships provide routes into a wide variety of careers and enable you to earn while you learn.

[www.future-talent.com](http://www.future-talent.com) site launched in 2012 that advertises apprenticeships and other alternatives to University.

[www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk)

For jobs, sponsored degrees, apprenticeships, volunteering and gap year opportunities.

[www.allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk](http://www.allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk)

This site carries advice, jobs and career information for students interested in school leaver schemes.

[www.opendoorsmedia.co.uk](http://www.opendoorsmedia.co.uk)

Register online to receive email updates about apprenticeship opportunities.

[www.thebigchoice.com](http://www.thebigchoice.com)

For 16+ jobs, apprenticeships, placements, internships and courses

[www.e4s.co.uk](http://www.e4s.co.uk)

Advertising student jobs, part time jobs, temporary jobs, internships, graduate jobs

<http://www.studentladder.co.uk>

Information on over 2500 Work Placements, Graduate Schemes & Internship opportunities for 16-24 year old students.

**Local Colleges of further Education**

[www.bracknell.ac.uk](http://www.bracknell.ac.uk) Bracknell and Wokingham college

[www.bca.ac.uk](http://www.bca.ac.uk) Berkshire College of Agriculture

[www.henleycol.ac.uk](http://www.henleycol.ac.uk) The Henley College

[www.reading-college.ac.uk](http://www.reading-college.ac.uk) Reading College

[www.farn-ct.ac.uk](http://www.farn-ct.ac.uk) Farnborough College of Technology

[www.strodes.ac.uk](http://www.strodes.ac.uk) Strodes College, Egham

[www.farnborough.ac.uk](http://www.farnborough.ac.uk) Farnborough 6th form college

**Local Apprenticeship Providers**

QA for a range of apprenticeships including IT Systems & Networking, Software & Web Development, Cyber Security, Digital Marketing, Project Management and

Business: [www.qa.com/apprenticeships](http://www.qa.com/apprenticeships)

Chiltern Training for Childcare apprenticeships: [www.lostsocks.co.uk](http://www.lostsocks.co.uk)

HIT for catering and Hospitality apprenticeships: [www.hittraining.co.uk](http://www.hittraining.co.uk)

Paragon Skills for a range of apprenticeships in childcare, health and social care, retail, business and admin, customer service and hairdressing: [www.paragonskills.co.uk](http://www.paragonskills.co.uk)

3AAA for apprenticeships in IT, accountancy and social media: [www.3aaa.co.uk](http://www.3aaa.co.uk)